

June 22, 2006

*****CORRECTED*****

Editors & reporters: The number of schools not making state goals was corrected to reflect those schools that showed a 5 percent gain from fall to spring.

Spring reading scores show continuous gains

The reading skills of Idaho's youngest students continue to improve according to results from the Idaho Reading Indicator released today by the State Department of Education.

"We are proud of the continuous improvement we've seen during the past six years," said Dr. Marilyn Howard, Superintendent of Public Instruction. "The credit belongs to the dedicated teachers and administrators in our state's elementary schools."

The improved performance and six years of gains, however, was not enough to allow the state and all elementary schools to meet every legislatively mandated goal for student performance this year.

"While we are pleased to see many schools reach the legislature's challenging goals," Howard said. "The work of those schools missing goals should not be diminished, because we set a very high standard for grade level performance."

Dr. Howard noted that the 10-minute IRI was one indicator of the reading skills of Idaho students. Other lengthier tests, including the ISAT and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), show higher levels of achievement by students. The 2005 Spring ISAT for third graders showed 84 percent of students were proficient and advanced. On the NAEP, Idaho was tied with Massachusetts and Texas for the strongest gains in fourth-grade reading proficiency among the states.

"These results seen together show that identifying students early and providing them extra assistance makes a difference," Dr. Howard said.

Overall results improve

Students in kindergarten through third grade took the Spring Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) this past April and May. The spring IRI is one of three progressively more difficult reading tests given each year to students in

kindergarten, first, second, and third grades as part of a state reading initiative launched in 1999-2000 school year.

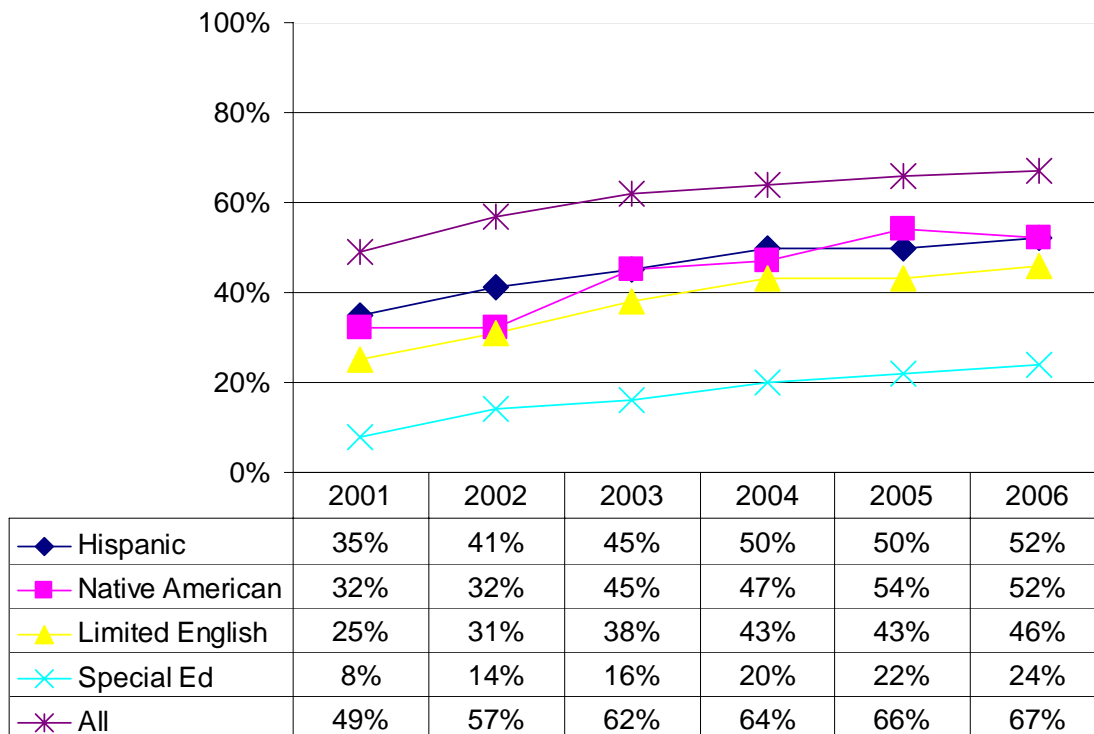
The spring 2006 results show that more students reached the highest standard – at grade level – on the IRI than the previous five years. Data show the percentage of students at grade level has increased across the four grade levels tested since 2001. Increases include 25 percent in kindergarten, 20 percent in first grade, 19 percent in second grade, and 18 percent in third grade.

Spring Idaho Reading Indicator							
Percent of Students Reading at grade level							
Grade level	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	6-year gain
Kindergarten	82%	80%	78%	72%	64%	57%	25%
First grade	72%	70%	69%	65%	60%	52%	20%
Second grade	72%	70%	69%	67%	62%	53%	19%
Third grade	67%	66%	64%	62%	57%	49%	18%

Groups show improvement

In addition to continuous overall gains, Idaho has seen gains for most groups during the past six years. In some cases, the gap between groups is narrowing and in others, groups have kept pace with overall growth.

Third Grade % At Grade Level By Major Group 2001-2006



State identifies schools missing state goals

In addition to releasing spring scores, the department also published a legislatively mandated list of schools that did not meet state reading goals for kindergarten, first, second, and third grades. The list is available on the department's website, www.sde.state.id.us/dept.

In 2001, the Legislature set reading targets for schools to meet starting in the spring of 2004 and ending in spring 2006. Statewide the goals for kindergarten and first grade were met, but the goals for second and third grade were not met.

Grade level	Legislative Goal	Spring 2006 Performance
Kindergarten	60%	83%*
First grade	70%	74%*
Second grade	80%	72%*
Third grade	85%	68%*

*For accountability purposes, only students that were enrolled 90% of the school year are included.

State law requires that the department identify schools missing grade-level goals. Of the state's 363 schools that gave the IRI:

- 9 schools missed the kindergarten goal of 60% at grade level or 5% growth from fall to spring
- 112 schools missed the first grade goal of 70% at grade level, or 5% growth from fall to spring
- 88 schools missed the second grade goal of 80% at grade level or 5% growth from fall to spring
- 105 schools missed the third grade goal of 85% at grade level or 5% growth from fall to spring

49 of the schools that did not meet the goals cannot be publicly listed because they have less than 10 students in kindergarten, first, second or third grades. Instead, those schools will be responsible for directly notifying parents that state goals were missed.

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(Editors and reporters: Links to complete state, school district, and school spring IRI reports and the list of schools that did not make state goals is available on the State Department of Education's website www.sde.state.id.us/dept.)